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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9438
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS NAIROBI 000908

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/RSA AND AF/E
ALSO FOR S/CT ZROTHSCHILD
ALSO FOR IIP/CTCC MAUSTEIN AND JVANDEVELDE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV KPAQ PTER EAID MOPS SO
SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PD ACTIVITIES UPDATE, MAY 6

REF: 07 STATE 116686

Summary

¶1. (SBU) Per reftel, Post submits the following update for the third week of April and first week of May 2009. End summary.

PD Activities

¶2. (SBU) The Somalia Unit, including the Military Information Support Team (MIST) dedicated to Somalia, performed para. 3-10 activities since the last report:

¶3. (SBU) After extended discussions with the senior staff of Mogadishu University, PAO arranged shipping to Mogadishu of the material for the long-awaited American Corner. The material had been sitting in an embassy warehouse in Nairobi for several years. The Somali coordinator for the project is an International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) alumni. PAO is completing an MOU and also working with AF/PD and IIP to augment the existing material and ensure this tool is utilized effectively.

¶4. (SBU) PAO remains engaged with the TFG on their ongoing efforts to establish and maintain a credible media outreach operation. In one notable success, PAO drafted a press release regarding the U.S. operation to rescue Maersk Alabama Captain Richard Phillips, which resulted in the deaths of three Somali pirates. The press release highlighted the fact that the U.S. government had exhausted all options before taking lethal action against the pirates, who were holding Phillips hostage. The Prime Minister's office published the press release almost verbatim, and Somali and international media outlets carried the press release.

¶5. (SBU) PAO is engaged on a frequent basis with the Transitional Federal Government's (TFG) Minister of Information, especially in light of both President Sharif and Prime Minister Sharmarke's having emphasized cooperation on media work in recent meeting with the Ambassador in Nairobi.

¶6. (SBU) PAO met with Puntland President Farole and discussed cooperation in media work. The President and his advisers were receptive to the offer. On April 30, Farole's office published almost verbatim a press release that PAO suggested in response to the April 29 attack on Puntland Intelligence Service officers in Galkayo.

¶7. (SBU) The Somalia Unit published a press release to Somali media outlets for World Press Freedom Day. Several journalists wrote to thank the U.S. government for the ongoing support and advocacy on behalf of Somali journalists.

¶8. (SBU) MIST activity, weeks of April 6, 13, 20 and 27: No programs were aired this week due to contracting issues. Programs will be aired as soon as all contracting issues have been resolved and all vendors have been paid for their prior work.

¶9. (SBU) MIST activity, week of April 13 (cont.): On April 18, MIST hosted a soccer tournament in Eastleigh, Nairobi's Somali enclave, with the theme &Youth for Peace in Somalia.⁸ Eleven teams of Somali youth showed up to the event and were given uniforms and soccer balls with the theme on them. Each team also received trophies and CDs from Waayaha Cusub, the Nairobi-based music group with whom we have done a great deal of work. The event went well with media coverage from Shabelle Media, Simba Radio, Quran Express, Somalia National Post, and Star FM. We have also received numerous phone calls pertaining to the tournament.

¶10. (SBU) MIST activity, week of April 13 (cont.): MIST has signed two contracts with vendors starting work on 01 May 2009. They will be using Sheikh Bundid, who will use Star FM to broadcast his lectures, and Simba Radio, who will continue with the peace and reconciliation radio program. The old contracts for the vendors have been ratified and they should be receiving payment in the near future.

RANNEBERGER